

**Comments on the proposed revocation of Article 74.7.3 of the Code (requirement for an express statement of the taxonomic purpose of a lectotype designation)**

(See BZN 58: 133–140)

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The comments on Article 74.7.3 of the Code published in BZN 58: 133–140 present the opinions of 23 persons who propose or support the revocation of the Article and of only seven who favour its retention.

One of the latter is Dr P.K. Tubbs, the Executive Secretary of the Commission (although he does make clear that the views he has expressed are personal ones). I find the argument in his penultimate paragraph especially surprising: ‘The belief that lectotypes should be designated as a matter of ‘routine’ revisory work is surely mistaken. Many well known species do not have any existing type material, and yet their names are of undoubted application; in other instances the taxon is better delineated by the original author’s type series than by a subsequent author’s arbitrary, if well meaning, restriction to a single specimen . . .’.

While literally correct when taken in isolation, in the context of the present discussion this statement implies that typification has only *ad hoc* function: the type is necessary only when the application of the name presents an explicit problem, and it is otherwise redundant. A modest extension of this claim uncovers the logic behind it, and would be: ‘The belief that types should be designated as a matter of routine work is surely mistaken’. To be consistent with this view and with Article 74.7.3 other Articles (those dealing with the designation of holotypes, type species and type genera) would have to be modified, to include demands that an author of *any* name must make an ‘express statement of taxonomic purpose’. However, nobody has proposed such modifications.

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I continue to hold the view which I mentioned previously about ‘routine’ lectotype designations which have no expressed statement of taxonomic purpose, but I certainly do not subscribe to the ‘modest extension’ of logic which Prof Rasnitsyn describes and which would hold that typification of taxa is usually redundant. Nor do I believe that all type designations, including those by the original authors of names, should be invalid unless accompanied by statements of purpose.

In practice most authors rightly explain the taxonomic purpose of establishing a new genus and why they are selecting a particular type species for it; the same applies to family-group taxa (in which the type genus determines the name itself). Typification has been mandatory for genus-group taxa since 1930, but the current Code is the first to require (Article 16.4) the explicit fixation of name-bearing types for new species. Typification of species has always been different from that of genera or families because the name-bearing type consists of one *or more* specimens, and is not a necessarily single named entity (a nominal species or genus). Because the author may consider that the new species is best illustrated by a series of specimens (e.g.

more than one sex or life stage) a holotype is not mandatory even now: syntypes suffice, or may be better. If the author has based the species on a series of specimens rather than a holotype, whether or not for a stated reason, then an arbitrary 'routine' restriction to a lectotype is a modification of the original work which may serve no purpose other than satisfying the entirely philosophical, and surely mistaken, belief that a name-bearing type must invariably be a single entity. If the syntypes are believed to be conspecific no taxonomic purpose is served by a lectotype; if they are not, or if there is doubt, then a lectotype is indeed necessary but it is not difficult to state this and so comply with Article 74.7.3. Later workers deserve to know why the type series has been restricted. Many routine designations of lectotypes have had the very unfortunate effect of changing the application of the names concerned, and this should become less common now that authors are obliged to state their reason for designating a particular lectotype.

**Comments on the proposed conservation of *Hydrobia* Hartmann, 1821 (Mollusca, Gastropoda) and *Cyclostoma acutum* Draparnaud, 1805 (currently *Hydrobia acuta*) by the replacement of the lectotype of *H. acuta* with a neotype; proposed designation of *Turbo ventrosus* Montagu, 1803 as the type species of *Ventrosia* Radoman, 1977; and proposed emendation of HYDROBIINA Mulsant, 1844 (Insecta, Coleoptera) to HYDROBIUSINA, so removing the homonymy with HYDROBIIDAE Troschel, 1857 (Mollusca)**

(Case 3087; see BZN 55: 139–145; 56: 56–63, 143–148, 187–190, 268–270; 58: 56–58, 140–141)

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Gittenberger (BZN 58: 140) states that there are clear affirmative answers to his three questions on the status of the lectotype for *Hydrobia acuta* (Draparnaud, 1805). We argue to the contrary. We conclude the following for Boeters's (1984) lectotype designation:

(a) The lectotype is taxonomically inadequate as it cannot be identified with certainty and it is most probably (see Wilke, Davis & Rosenberg, BZN 56: 187–190) a specimen of *Ventrosia ventrosa* (Montagu, 1803), and (b) stability and universality are threatened because Boeters's lectotype is not in accord with the prevailing usage of the name.

**(a) Taxonomic inadequacy of the lectotype**

The geographic origin of Draparnaud's (1805) syntypes is unknown. Neither the original description nor any data accompanying the original material, collector's notes, itineraries or personal communications indicate where the material came from. *Hydrobia acuta* is known from the western Mediterranean (as *H. a. acuta*) and from the northeastern Atlantic (as *H. a. neglecta*) (see Wilke et al., 2000) and the notion that Draparnaud's material came from the Étang du Prévost (to which *H. acuta* was restricted by Radoman, 1977) near Montpellier, where Draparnaud lived, is not justified.

The origin of Draparnaud's material is important because locality data are crucial for the determination of hydrobiid taxa. As we stressed in our previous comment